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## HOLMES'S LIFE OF EMERSON.

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A LIFE of Ralph Waldo Emerson by Oliver Wendell Holmes is an event in the literary world too remarkable to be passed over by the NORTH AMERICAN REVIEW without immediate notice. The biographer unites in himself all the accomplishments that fit him for the work of love which he has undertaken. He was the neighbor and the frequent companion of Emerson, having with him a friendship without reserve. Holmes himself is one of the remarkable men of his generation, and, high as his place is in our literature, he holds a still higher one in personal worth and efficiency in active life. The public willingly accords to him any praise which it perceives that he deserves, though it does not at once hold in its view all his merits. Holmes, in the first place, is a man of science; then, he is great in his profession, in which he has gained distinction as a professor in the university and as an author; and again, he is one of our most popular poets, discoursing in his verse on everything, from that which can raise the beginning of a gentle smile through all the gradations of the cheerful to the inimitable expression of the most complete mirth, and yet knowing how to take up the sternest lesson of morality, and make the castaway shell on the sea-shore teach the individual and the nation to press forward in the career of improvement, or forfeit the purpose and beauty of life. Nor must it be left out of view that Holmes, under the guidance of his father, whose name is held in high respect by all the students of his country's history, was not only well grounded in the annals of America, but, aided by heredity through a splendid line, was thoroughly well trained in the very best lessons of Connecticut orthodoxy. Besides this, he has after a fashion of his own reproduced the system of pleasing instruction by dialogue. But in each of these he appeals in some degree to a special public, and no one of these separate

parts of the public knows him entirely. He is like a man who has three or four estates of land lying out of sight of each other, and none but his friends take cognizance of the vastness of his possessions. Or his merits are as stars in different constellations, which no telescope can bring into one field of vision. Every one of these acquisitions—his science, his public spirit, his poetry, and the rest—goes with him to his work on the life, writings, character, and influence of Emerson. And here comes again into view a quality of Holmes,—instead of seizing the brilliant opportunity for the display of himself, he brings all his powers to be used exclusively for the task he has in hand, and steadily directs the attention of his reader, not to himself, but to the man of whom he is writing. And more than this; he has not allowed his mind to be biased by his affection and personal esteem; he writes, disguising nothing, palliating nothing, concealing nothing; but in the expression of his judgment he is always gentle, urbane, and tender-hearted, giving praise where it is due, but making no overstatement. It may be a surprise to those who do not know him, to find him so perfect in his metaphysics; but he follows Emerson through all his trains of thought, and states them concisely and clearly, with such completeness and exactness that he could not have done better if he had passed all his life in the chair of a professor of philosophy.

Our illustrious biographer, who knows very well that by the right of descent the genius of a Brahmin whom Alexander the Great, after he had passed the Himalayas, might have conversed with, may re-appear in the brain of a pupil in a New England town school, begins by giving us a long array of ancestors among whom one must search for those through whom Emerson was born to be what he became. Among them he rightly distinguishes Emerson's grandfather, who more than a hundred years ago was the minister of Concord. When Emerson, more than forty years ago, accompanied me on a visit to the town school-master of the olden time, who was still alive, in excellent health, of vigorous mind, and with a ready recollection of the deeds he had witnessed in his early days, we encouraged him to tell his story of what happened in Concord on the 19th of April, 1775, but took care not to ask him a question or in any way to interrupt or disturb him in his narrative. The messengers that went in advance of the British to sound

the alarm through all the villages on their way, reached Concord some hours before the enemy. The bell of the town meeting-house was at once set a-ringing, and the school-master, as he told of the instant gathering of the minute-men, related that our Emerson's grandfather, the minister of the town, came at the alarm from his house to join the men of his congregation, bringing with him his gun and ammunition. At the words announcing that he came armed, the bluest of blue eyes in my companion shone with a mild radiance of surprise and delight and pride, for he had not before heard this special circumstance that the minister came bearing arms. The Emerson of that day further bequeathed to his descendant a deep insight into the meaning of facts, for in April, 1775, he entered in his almanac, which was his diary: "This month is remarkable for the greatest events of the present age."

Emerson came into the world with an enduring constitution, so that he lived to be within one year of fourscore. He had excellent organs of digestion, and in mature life could "eat pie" like a school-boy; he slept well at night, and during sleep kept a window open, even in midwinter; but he complains more than twice of his want of power of voice and "a commanding presence"; so that the reader of his life is led to indulge in a surmise what he would have become if he had had "a commanding presence" like Webster; or if to the question, "Whose voice is music now?" he could have claimed a right to place himself by the side of Henry Clay. Whenever he exercised his mind on public affairs, he did so with judgment and courage.

Emerson went through school and our Cambridge College without exciting remark; for his livelihood after leaving college he taught a school in Boston, enlivening the toil by writing exquisite poems; thought a moment of becoming a lawyer, for which profession he was wholly unfit; studied divinity; visited the South; and at twenty-five was settled in Boston as colleague of Henry Ware, who in life and thought was one of the purest men that ever lived, and totally free from extravagance or waywardness. Emerson was soon most happily married, and life seemed to open upon him in the full promise of occupation, peace, and happiness. But ere long his days were overclouded; he lost the wife of his youth; and, while he had not the least inclination to skepticism, the uncontrollable range of his mind soon brought him at variance with the sober-

mined men of the society to which he had become the minister. He disliked the form in which the communion was administered in the Congregational churches of New England, and he grieved at the distinction that was made between members of the church and other members of the congregation. The people of his society thought otherwise, and this was his answer :

“ It is my desire, in the office of a Christian minister, to do nothing which I cannot do with my whole heart. Having said this, I have said all. I have no hostility to this institution ; I am only stating my want of sympathy with it. Neither should I ever have obtruded this opinion upon other people, had I not been called by my office to administer it. That is the end of my opposition, that I am not interested in it. I am content that it stand to the end of the world, if it please men and please Heaven, and I shall rejoice in all the good it produces.” (Emerson’s works, xi., p. 28.)

And so he parted with his congregation, and was left without wife, or child, or fixed occupation.

Hardly was Emerson liberated from service, when he visited Sicily, Italy, France, and England, and saw Coleridge, Wordsworth, Landor, and De Quincey. The biographer of Carlyle gives us an account of the light and joy that Emerson brought to the recluse and his wife in their remote solitude in Scotland. They were blessed days for Carlyle, for, through Emerson, Carlyle, before he had obtained distinction in England, established a reputation in America which re-acted on England ; and Emerson, by his zeal and his labor and his influence, secured him for a time in America the copyright which our country still fails to concede to the foreigner. Nothing better could be asked for than the characterization and contrast of the two by Holmes. (Pp. 82, 83.)

The young American philosopher preached in Great Britain, charming by the consummate beauty of his language and the dignity and simplicity of his manner. He made no war on any form of Christianity ; he could go into a rhapsody on the sublime thought and poetic beauty of the book of Psalms, and praised the *Te Deum* of the established church as the grand “hymn which had come down through the ages, voicing the praises of generation after generation.” Returning home, he soon became a resident of Concord, of which he that will know the loveliness must read the delightful description by Holmes. (P. 70.)

He liked and extolled in Christianity the institution of preaching ; and now, bound in the spirit to continue the prac-

tice of addressing his fellow-men, he sought his audience through the lecture-room or the press. The character of his mind, as he found himself in solitude in his native town, was to see the whole universe in its unity, all as one effluence of the same great and infinite and universal spirit. "The feeling that truth and beauty and virtue are one, and that nature is the symbol that typifies it to the soul, is the inspiring sentiment." (Pp. 74, 75.) So he selected Michael Angelo for the first subject of an illustrative discourse, because to him the sublime workman had no country of his own, and was a friend to every one of the human race who acknowledges the beauty that beams in universal nature and seeks to approach its source in perfect goodness.

Emerson, in the choice of the next hero over whom he was to shed the luster of his praise, was equally guided by his own nature. In spite of all his gracefulness and reserve and love of the unbroken tranquillity of serene thought, he was by the right of heredity a belligerent for the cause of freedom, of which John Milton, among all the great English poets, was the foremost champion. From the inmost core of his character Milton was the herald of rightful liberty and its ever-ready warrior where it fell into danger. He wrote in sublime and impassioned prose for liberty of mind, of man, and of the state. He has furnished to the English-speaking world the best epic, the best ode, the best elegies, in the mood of joyousness and in the mood of meditation; sonnets full of high thought, expressed in the strongest and noblest words, and the most delightful mask for representation in the social circle. In advanced life, when all his hopes for the political reform of England had been wrecked, he writes the best tragedy that has ever been written in modern times according to the rules of the Greek drama, and in it paints in perfection the comeliness and the reviving power of men who, "armed with celestial vigor and plain, heroic magnitude of mind," make a glorious revolution in behalf of the liberty of mankind; and then, mindful of the sorrows that had fallen on himself and his associates, is driven for consolation to remember that

"Patience is more oft the exercise  
Of saints, the trial of their fortitude."

("Samson Agonistes," lines 1268-1291.)

Such a hero had a right to find a resting-place on Emerson's breast; and this is what he writes of him: "It is the preroga-

tive of this great man to stand at this hour foremost of all men in the power to inspire. Virtue goes out of him into others. Better than any other he has discharged the office of every great man, namely, to raise the idea of man in the minds of his contemporaries and of posterity, exhibiting such a composition of grace, of strength, and of virtue as poet had not described nor hero lived." No "philosopher in England, France, or Germany communicates the same vibration of hope, of self-reverence, of piety, of delight in beauty, which the name of Milton awakes." (Pp. 75, 76.)

The year 1835 was an auspicious one for Emerson ; he formed a second happy marriage. In due time a family sprung up about him, giving him companionship more than care. In the same year the people of Concord called on him to pronounce a discourse on the history of his native town for the period of two hundred years, and he who in his philosophy treats facts as the glorified representations of the infinite, and cannot always draw with sharpness the outline of his thought, went to work with zeal and unwearied research to write the history of a New England village. His toil had its reward ; he produced a discourse marked by accuracy in detail, the justest judgment, and a style of perfect simplicity and clearness ; while his philosophy, coming without observation, underlies every line. Had it fallen to his lot to become a historian, he would have had no superior in fair-mindedness, persistent study, vividness of narrative, and the most sacred fidelity to truth. Again, in the next year, at the celebration of the 19th of April, he wrote verses that will remain in memory as long as the deeds that drew them forth.

In the following years Emerson found pleasure in meeting the young men of the country at the period of their education in the universities, and from time to time delivered addresses that were greatly admired when they were pronounced, and are preserved in his works. In an oration delivered before the members of the Phi Beta Kappa Society of our Cambridge, on the day after commencement in 1837, he spoke to a crowded audience in this wise :

"The problem of restoring to the world original and eternal beauty is solved by the redemption of the soul. Thought is devout, and devotion is thought. Deep calls unto deep ; but in actual life the marriage is not celebrated. There are patient naturalists, but they freeze their subject under the wintry light of the understanding. Is not prayer also a study of truth —

a sally of the soul into the unfound infinite? No man ever prayed heartily without learning something. The invariable mark of wisdom is to see the miraculous in the common. When the fact is seen under the light of an idea, the gaudy fable fades and shrivels. We behold the real higher law. To the wise, therefore, a fact is true poetry, and the most beautiful of fables. These wonders are brought to our own door. You also are a man. Every spirit builds itself a house, and beyond its house a world, and beyond its world a heaven. Know, then, that the world exists for you. For you is the phenomenon perfect. All that Adam had, all that Cæsar could, you have and can do. Adam called his house heaven and earth; Cæsar called his house Rome; you perhaps call yours a cobbler's trade, a hundred acres of ploughed land, or a scholar's garret. Yet, line for line, and point for point, your dominion is as great as theirs, though without fine names. Build, therefore, your own world. As fast as you conform your life to the pure idea in your mind, that will unfold its great proportions." (Emerson's works, i., 77, 78, 79.)

In midsummer of the following year he uttered more startling words. The mind of the country was very widely agitated by the endeavor to prepare the way for the universal acceptance of the multitudinous and ever-increasing revelations of science, by eliminating from the public mind the host of traditional errors that clung to it like barnacles to good ships that return from a long cruise. Invited by the Senior Class in Divinity College to deliver an address before them on a Sunday evening in July, 1838, he spoke of the "defects of historical Christianity," while at the same time he accepted the principles of Christianity as absolute truth—truth from the beginning, and truth that was sure to remain forever. His biographer, with a thorough knowledge of the nature of the questions that were brought into issue, has analyzed the address and stated its meaning with accuracy and precision. When Emerson was met by manifold objections, both to the form of statement that he had chosen for utterance and its inappropriateness to the place in which it had been delivered, to the question why he and his ideas were there, he could only answer for himself and his ideas in the language of his own Rhodora:

"I never thought to ask, I never knew;  
But, in my simple ignorance, suppose,  
The self-same power that brought you there brought me."

And when he found some of those whom he greatly esteemed, as well as those to whom he was indifferent, were bent on



making him out to be a heretic, he refused to offer "to make good his thesis against all comers," saying: "I delight in telling what I think, I shall go on just as before, seeing whatever I can, and telling what I see"; and he persistently adhered to the rule which he had established as the rule of his life:

"Lowly faithful, banish fear,  
Right onward drive, unharmed."

(Emerson's works, ix., 217.)

Bitter controversy could not be avoided. Emerson in the earliest part of his life had declared of Christianity that "Miracles are not its evidence to us, but the doctrines themselves," yet he took very little part in the strife which broke out and which ended for him in a signal triumph. One of the very ablest writers in New England, the head of a school in theology, himself in private life one of the most estimable of men, sounded a loud clarion and took the field. He was perhaps the unfittest man to take up arms against Emerson, for he admitted none of the special tenets of orthodoxy, not even the theory of the will as defined by Jonathan Edwards with the clearness of light, and now accepted by Huxley with all or most of his brothers in science, as well as by Calvinists of the new school and the old, and he had taken care through the press to let it be known by all his circle that he had reasons for not believing in the Trinity. He planted himself on the assertion that, "Miracles recorded in the New Testament are the only proof of the divine origin of Christianity." (Frothingham's "Life of George Ripley," p. 100.)

In the good old times of orthodoxy, more than a hundred years ago, the church-member was not asked for a belief in Christianity from its historical evidence, but whether he had an inward experience of its truth. The opinions of the deists of the eighteenth century found no home in New England. Edwards used to say that the more the truth of Christianity was discussed purely on historical grounds, the greater was the spread of infidelity; and to show the folly of resting the truth of religion on narratives of the performance of miracles, he puts forward this supposition: A Christian missionary goes out to India to convert its heathen, and when he is asked for his proof of the truth of his religion, answers that its founder performed miracles. "Miracles!" the East Indian would instantly

answer; "my religion had for its proof a hundred miracles to your one."

Ripley had an easy task of it to refute the argument of his opponent; and the strife awakened Theodore Parker to go abroad like a raging Hercules armed with a club. Ripley more quietly persisted in making the American mind familiar with that of the philosophers in the countries of Leibnitz and of Bossuet, and superintended the publication of translations by himself and his friends of works of Cousin and Jouffroy, Benjamin Constant, and others. The series was well received in Boston and through the country. It naturally touched a chord in Paris. Cousin was moved to write over to a friend then residing in Boston, for a copy of the works of Jonathan Edwards. Opinion began to rise, and after many years ripened in Paris, that under the auspices of Emerson there had been a revival of philosophy in and around Boston. It reached the Institute of France. A vacancy occurring in the Academy, of which the admirable Mignet was the perpetual secretary, its members looked the world through for the proper person to fill it, and on account of this influence of Emerson on thought and of the exquisite beauty of his style and the simplicity and integrity with which he had treated philosophical subjects, he out of all candidates in the world was selected as the fittest to receive the appointment to the vacant arm-chair.

In 1847 Emerson published his first and best volumes of poems. Is he to be considered one of the greatest poets? Will he be cherished by the people? Will his fame and his song be transmitted to the latest generations? "The bard," he himself says,

"Must smite the chords rudely and hard,  
As with hammer or with mace;  
That they may render back  
Artful thunder.  
Leaving rule and pale forethought,  
He shall not his brain encumber  
With the coil of rhythm and number."

(Emerson's works, ix., 106, 107.)

No one, therefore, can be surprised if Emerson is sometimes unmelodious. He makes it the primal duty of the orator, and it is equally so of the poet, "to translate a truth into language perfectly intelligible to the person to whom you speak." (Pp. 285,

286.) The verses of Emerson are sometimes difficult to be understood. He finds the subjects of poetry only in nature, whereas the highest poetry leads us into the secret of the passions, relations, and actions of living men and women. Homer treats of men and women, of love and war, of heroes and demigods, and of the gods themselves, is always melodious, and is always clear even to a child. And yet Emerson, though so different from Homer, was a poet; that which he has done best, and which will live longest, is in verse.

"Emerson," so writes Holmes, "is always seeing the universal in the particular; is a citizen of the universe; deals with symbols too vast, sometimes too vague; sees the hidden spiritual meaning of things as Cayley and Sylvester see the meaning of their mysterious formulæ; finds in every phenomenon of nature a hieroglyphic. Others measure and describe the monuments; he reads the sacred inscriptions. How alive he makes Monadnoc! Without the help of tools or workmen, Emerson makes 'Cheshire's haughty hill' stand before us an impersonation of kingly humanity, and talk with us as a god from Olympus might have talked. This is the fascination of his poetry; the sense of the infinite fills it with its majestic presence; he has also a keen delight in the every-day aspects of nature. If Emerson is a careless versifier and rhymers, still in his verse there is something which belongs, indissolubly, sacredly, to his thought. All his earlier verse has a certain freshness which belongs to the first outburst of song in a poetic nature. If in the flights of his imagination he is like the strong-winged bird of passage, in his exquisite choice of descriptive epithets his subtle selective instinct penetrates the vocabulary for the one word he wants." (Pp. 321, 322, 323.)

Thus far our biographer. If we turn to special poems, we find "The Problem" a bit of autobiography. In whatever year it may have been written down, it expresses the thought of Emerson when in his earliest manhood he was still teaching a school in Boston. The ancients have a story of a demigod who as he entered the world was stopped at a cross-road by two personages who, in rivalry with each other, sought to direct him in the choice that he was to make between the two roads for his journey through life. The one offered him the goblet filled to the brim with pleasure; the other, the stern virtues of self-sacrifice for the welfare of his fellow-men. In like manner

Emerson brings back the moment when on his entrance to life two inward voices plead with him. To hear and decide between them, he places himself seemingly before a prelate, one of the most liberal that ever lived — Jeremy Taylor, "the Shakespeare of divines." He must choose whether he will be a seer or a priest; whether he will aspire to the Divinity by intuition, or through the portals of an established church; and Emerson, having in his mind the beautiful, no less than the good and the true, recounts the struggle and his choice in living words that came directly from the soul. Among the fragments of the poetry written by philosophers of antiquity, whether Greek or Roman, nothing of the kind has come down to us that is so good.

Emerson, without entering upon deep scientific researches, gladly received the new teachings of our century.\* Tyndall, the man of science, cites from Emerson four lines that excel in beauty of statement and in their truth:

"Thou canst not wave thy staff in air,  
Or dip thy paddle in the lake,  
But it carves the bow of beauty there,  
And the ripples in rhyme the oar forsake."

In like manner our all-observant biographer does not fail to point out how Emerson, many years before the publications of Darwin on the descent of man, wrote:

"The youth reads omens where he goes,  
And speaks all languages the rose.  
The wood-fly mocks with tiny noise  
The far halloo of human voice.  
The perfumed berry on the spray  
Smacks of faint memories far away.  
A subtle chain of countless rings  
The next unto the farthest brings,  
And, striving to be man, the worm  
Mounts through all the spires of form."

These lines find their place in the midst of the most glowing description of the changes wrought in nature when the marble sleep of winter is broken and the happy spring brings all her dowry. They keep their place in the new London edition of

\* Tyndall's "Lectures on Light," p. 54.

Emerson's works.\* They are left out from their place in the American edition of Emerson's works (ix., 145), perhaps because some of them have been prefixed to one of his prose essays; but that is no reason for excluding them from their original place, unless Emerson of himself, in the full strength of his mind, gave other directions.

On all occasions the mind of Emerson turned to that which was general, to that which concerned the whole. When returning from an excursion into the forest he first learned that telegraph wires had been successfully anchored under the ocean, "the new-found path for thought," he declares,

" Shall lift man's public action to a height  
Worthy the enormous cloud of witnesses,  
When linked hemispheres attest his deed."

(Emerson's works, ix., 167.)

And it may be that by the closer connection of nations slavery will be abolished, rulers compelled to avoid making themselves the enemies of the human race, and respect for the rights of the half-civilized and the uncivilized find better anchoring-ground in the hearts of mankind.

The criticisms of our wise biographer on Emerson are throughout candid and instructive. As last words of criticism we cite: "We may not be able to assign the reason of the fascination which the poet we have been considering exercises over us; but this we can say, that he lives in the highest atmosphere of thought; that he is always in the presence of the infinite, and ennobles the accidents of human existence so that they partake of the absolute and eternal while he is looking at them; that he unites a royal dignity of manner with the simplicity of primitive nature; that his words and phrases arrange themselves, as if by an elective affinity of their own, with a *curiosa felicitas* which captivates and enthralls the reader who comes fully under its influence; and that through all he sings as in all he says for us we recognize the same serene, high, pure intelligence and moral nature." (Pp. 341, 342.)

It is a matter of interest to know the political opinions of Emerson; and here are those which he held in the years just preceding the year 1840: "Of the two great parties which, at

\* Macmillan's edition of Emerson's poems, vol. iii. of his works, and pp. 195, 196.

this hour, almost share the nation between them, I should say that one has the best cause, and the other contains the best men. The philosopher, the poet, or the religious man will, of course, wish to cast his vote with the Democrat, for free trade, for wide suffrage, for the abolition of legal cruelties in the penal code, and for facilitating in every manner the access of the young and the poor to the sources of wealth and power. But he can rarely accept the persons whom the so-called popular party propose to him as representatives of these liberties. On the other side, the Conservative party, composed of the most moderate, able, and cultivated part of the population, is timid, and merely defensive of property. It indicates no right, it aspires to no real good, it brands no crime, it proposes no generous policy, it does not build nor write, nor cherish the arts, nor foster religion, nor establish schools, nor encourage science, nor emancipate the slave, nor befriend the poor, or the Indian, or the immigrant. From neither party, when in power, has the world any benefit to expect in science, art, or humanity, at all commensurate with the resources of the nation." (P. 187.)

When, in the struggle between slavery and free labor, Senator Sumner was struck down by violence, and strong and combined efforts were made to force slavery upon Kansas against the will of its people, Emerson threw aside all the reserve of private life to rouse the people to observation and resolute action. One party set up for its candidate for the presidency a man who had not sufficient force of character to have formed an effective government; and the other, a man who could not be depended upon to resist promptly the movements toward disunion. Emerson, as clearly as any one, perhaps more clearly than any one at the time, saw the enormous dangers that were gathering over the Constitution. At a meeting held in Cambridge, Massachusetts, on the 10th of September, 1856, he spoke in this wise:

"The hour is coming when the strongest will not be strong enough. A harder task will the new revolution of the nineteenth century be than was the revolution of the eighteenth century. I think the American Revolution bought its glory cheap. If the problem was new, it was simple. If there were few people, they were united, and the enemy three thousand miles off. But now, vast property, gigantic interests, family connections, webs of party, cover the land with a network that immensely multiplies the dangers of war. Fellow-citizens, in these times full of the fate of the republic, I think the towns should hold town meetings, and resolve themselves into com-

mittees of safety, go into permanent sessions, adjourning from week to week, from month to month. I wish we could send the sergeant-at-arms to stop every American who is about to leave the country. Send home every one who is abroad, lest they should find no country to return to. Come home and stay at home, while there is a country to save." (Emerson's works, xi., 248.)

It would certainly be difficult, perhaps impossible, to find any speech, made in the same year, that is marked with so much courage and foresight as this of Emerson. More than five years later, when an officer of the army attempted to open the eyes of the government to the all but infinite difficulties that lay in its path and the vastness of the preparations that were needful for success, he was held to be wild and extravagant in his demands. Even after the inauguration of Lincoln, several months passed away before his Secretary of State or he himself saw the future so clearly as Emerson had foreshadowed it in 1856. He lived to see an end of slavery throughout our land; and in a great old age fell finally asleep, with his wife and with children for his survivors, and with the love and veneration of all who had known him.

When he was established in a home of his own, it became the home of his mother; and the regard he showed her was marked by a singular mixture of veneration and affection, as if he had always in mind the very tender memory of their sorrows in the time when she alone bore all the burden of her orphan children. How he could love a brother is recorded for us in the poem in which he bewails a brother's death; how intense was his tenderness as a father, by the words in which he poured forth his sorrows at the death of one of his sons. He never failed a friend; he never forgot his duty to any human being. He held that men were made to do good to one another; it was no burden to him to receive good offices; and he was never weary of ministering to the wants of others, often with a too lavish generosity. In public affairs his nearest object of affection was that of his town, and he knew how, when he pleased, to guide its councils at its meetings. His next love was his State; next came the Union; and next the federation of the many nations of the human race.

In his principles he did not change throughout his life, and there never was a moment in which he was not true to them. He knew how to "obey the voice at eve obeyed at prime." His

own peace he secured by a tranquillity of mind which never could be disturbed except by wounds that reached his affections. He was an optimist, always full of hope, finding skyborn music in everything, and a power in nature to lift better up to best. He lived always in the enjoyment of universal esteem. While still in the vigor of manhood he had obtained celebrity throughout the nations that lead the culture of the world. Germany was familiar with him through his own works and the able and earnest and most friendly interpretations of them by Herman Grimm. In England his prose and his verse gained alike an ever-increasing audience, and were read and admired in every class of society. The Institute of France showed him honors such as the Academy in elder days had tendered to Benjamin Franklin. At death no one was left alive who was hostile to his good fame or unwilling to extol his virtues. To complete the measure of his happiness, Oliver Wendell Holmes, a favorite with the cultivated English-speaking peoples of two hemispheres, has risen up to be his biographer, and finds that he had no office but to relate how perfect Ralph Waldo Emerson was in sincerity, in the love of justice, and in devotedness to truth, to the beautiful, and to the good.

GEORGE BANCROFT.